

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Original) A method for preparing crosslinked polysaccharide microparticles, which comprise the following steps:

- a) preparing a dilute solution containing a polysaccharide derivative having a crosslinkable functional group(s);
- b) dispersing the solution to form microparticulate droplets; and
- c) concentrating the solution contained in the droplets to facilitate crosslinking reaction of the polysaccharide derivative.

2. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the polysaccharide is hyaluronic acid.

3. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1 ~~or 2~~, wherein step b) is a step in which the solution is dispersed by spraying to form microparticulate droplets.

4. (Currently Amended) The method according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 3~~ claim 1, wherein the resulting microparticles have an average particle diameter of 0.01 μm to 150 μm .

5. (Currently Amended) The method according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 4~~ claim 1, wherein the resulting microparticle is a drug carrier.

6. (Currently Amended) The method according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 5~~ claim 1, wherein the resulting microparticle is a sustained-release drug carrier.

7. (Currently Amended) The method according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 6~~ claim 1, wherein the dilute solution before the crosslinking reaction contains a drug, and the drug is held in the microparticles obtained after the crosslinking reaction.

8. (Original) The method according to claim 7, wherein the crosslinking reaction does not cause drug denaturation even in the presence of the drug.

9. (Currently Amended) The method according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 8~~ claim 1, wherein the crosslinkable functional group is a mercapto group, and the crosslinking reaction is a reaction in which crosslinkages are formed by disulfide formation.

10. (Currently Amended) The method according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 8~~ claim 1, wherein the crosslinking reaction is a reaction in which crosslinkages are formed by addition reaction between a mercapto group and an unsaturated bond.

11. (Currently Amended) The method according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 8~~ claim 1, wherein the crosslinking reaction is a reaction in which crosslinkages are formed by reaction between a hydrazide group and an activated carboxylic acid ester.

12. (Original) A crosslinked polysaccharide microparticle, which can be prepared by a method comprising the following steps:

a) preparing a dilute solution containing a polysaccharide derivative having a crosslinkable functional group(s);

- b) dispersing the solution to form microparticulate droplets; and
- c) concentrating the solution contained in the droplets to facilitate crosslinking reaction of the polysaccharide derivative.

13. (Original) The crosslinked polysaccharide microparticle according to claim 12, wherein the polysaccharide is hyaluronic acid.

14. (Currently Amended) The microparticle according to claim 12 ~~or 13~~, wherein step b) is a step in which the solution is dispersed by spraying to form microparticulate droplets.

15. (Currently Amended) The microparticle according to ~~any one of claims 12 to 14~~ claim 12, which has an average particle diameter of 0.01 μm to 150 μm .

16. (Currently Amended) The microparticle according to ~~any one of claims 12 to 15~~ claim 12, which is a drug carrier.

17. (Currently Amended) The microparticle according to ~~any one of claims 12 to 16~~ claim 12, which is a sustained-release drug carrier.

18. (Currently Amended) The microparticle according to ~~any one of claims 12 to 17~~ claim 12, wherein the dilute solution before the crosslinking reaction contains a drug, and the drug is held in the microparticle obtained after the crosslinking reaction.

19. (Original) The microparticle according to claim 18, wherein the crosslinking reaction does not cause drug denaturation even in the presence of the drug.

20. (Currently Amended) The microparticle according to ~~any one of claims 12 to 19~~ claim 12, wherein the crosslinkable functional group is a mercapto group, and the crosslinking reaction is a reaction in which crosslinkages are formed by disulfide formation.

21. (Currently Amended) The microparticle according to ~~any one of claims 12 to 19~~ claim 12, wherein the crosslinking reaction is a reaction in which crosslinkages are

In re of: HAHN5

formed by addition reaction between a mercapto group and an unsaturated bond.

22. (Currently Amended) The microparticle according to ~~any one of claims 12 to 19~~ claim 12, wherein the crosslinking reaction is a reaction in which crosslinkages are formed by reaction between a hydrazide group and an activated carboxylic acid ester.